DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 229 756 CS 207 474

AUTHOR Monahan, Brian D.
TITLE Revision Strategies of Basic and Competent Writers as They Write for Different Audiences.
PUB DATE [82]
NOTE 32p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Grade 12; High Schools; *Revision (Written Composition); *Writing Instruction; *Writing Processes; *Writing Research; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Audience Awareness; *Basic Writing

ABSTRACT

To describe systematically the revision strategies of basic and competent writers, eight twelfth grade students were asked to write for two different audiences--their teachers and their peers. Each subject met with the investigator for five sessions of one hour each. The first session was devoted to providing the subjects with training in a composing aloud procedure. During the second session, the subjects were asked to write a composition on the topic, "A Needed Change in the School Cafeteria," with the teacher as audience. During session three the next day, subjects revised or redrafted their compositions. During sessions four and five, approximately two weeks later, the subjects repeated the procedure for sessions two and three, using an equivalent topic, "A Needed Change in T.V. Programming," but directed to a different audience--the students' peers. An intensive analysis of the composing/revising processes of two selected subjects was made, and an overview of all eight subjects supported the conclusion that the students designated as competent writers made more revisions than the students designated as basic writers. Although both groups made most of their changes at the word and surface levels, the competent writers were more likely to make changes at the clause, sentence, and paragraph levels. Basic writers made more revisions for the teacher audience while the competent writers made more revisions for the peer audience. Although the basic writers used the same revision strategies as the competent writers, they used many of these strategies less often. (HOD)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED229756

# Revision Strategies of Basic and Competent Writers as They Write for Different Audiences

by

Brian D. Monahan
Administrative Intern
Longfellow Middle School
Yonkers, New York 10701

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Brian D. Monahan
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Business Phone (914) 963-4567 Ext. 269

Home Mailing Address
14 Deerfoot Lane
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

Home Phone (914) 693-0521

Running head: Revision Strategies

CS 207 474

Revision Strategies of Basic and Competent Writers as They Write for Different Audiences

The general area of research on composing has undergone a dramatic shift in the past decade with the focus of theory and research moving from the written product to the writing process. Until recently, as Murray (1978) suggested, revision was ignored because it was a component of the writing process that was not available for inspection through traditional research strategies. Sommers (1980) suggested that the absence of research on revision is a function of a theory of writing which makes revision both superfluous and redundant. Nold (1979) theorized that writers and texts who believed they were dealing with revision often were only dealing with one of its subprocesses, namely editing.

Both theory and research support the hypotheses that the ability to revise successfully is a characteristic of competent writers but not of basic writers (Sommers, 1978) and that competent writers demonstrate more audience awareness than basic writers (Comprone, 1978). Additionally, Hirsch (1977) and Ong (1975) theorized that competent writers have a strategy for revision that includes an awareness of audience. Flower and Hayes (1980) suggested that a characteristic of successful writers is a willingness to revise their representation of the rhetorical problem (including the audience).

## Review of Related Literature

The theory and research on revision in the school setting suggest that the methods used to "teach" revision and audience awareness in the school may be inconsistent with current research on the nature of the writing process in general and revision and audience in particular.

That literature suggests that both teachers and students may have misconceptions about what revision really is and that, consequently, students equate revision with punishment (Emig, 1971; Spear, Note 1). It further suggests that teachers may encourage students to revise at inappropriate points in the writing process (Pferrer, Note 2), and that students confuse revision and rewriting (Burnette, 1980). The literature also suggests that students rarely get the chance to write for real audiences and purposes (Barrit, 1981; Birnbaum, 1980; Martin, 1977). Researchers who have studied audience as a component of the writing process have found a great deal of emphasis on writing for the teacher/examiner (Applebee, Lehr & Auten, 1981; McTeague, 1980).

The nature of the current study made it appropriate to look at competence in writing from two different perspectives: that of an independent rater who looks at the written product and that of a researcher who looks at the writing process. The most common method of identifying writing that is competent has become the holistic score. Cooper (1977) made the following statement, "When there is commitment and time to do the work required to achieve reliability of judgment, holistic evaluation of writing remains the most valid and direct means of rank-ordering students by writing ability" (p. 3). The reliability that can be achieved through the use of holistic scoring notwithstanding, theory and research suggest that basic writing may not be "worse" than competent writing, but rather, that it might be less developed. This lack of development is often characterized by an egocentric rhetorical stance (Lunsford, 1980) and an inability to achieve the level of cognitive development which Vygotsky (1962)

labeled "true concept formation."

Research on competence in writing is of two types: research which looks at the writing processes of one or more writers of a particular level of competence and research which compares and contrasts the writing processes of writers of different competence levels. Perl (1979) studied the composing processes of basic writers who were college freshmen. One of the characteristics of basic writers that she identified was "selective perception." According to her, many basic writers operate as if what is in their heads is already on the page. Perl (1980) later suggested that the ability to recognize what one needs to do or where one needs to go is informed by calling on a "felt sense." Based on her research, Perl (1979) concluded that the writers in her study had stable composing processes that they used whenever they were presented with a writing task, but she raised the question of whether skilled writers call on their "felt sense" more often than unskilled writers.

A study which compared the writing processes of writers of varying levels of competence was undertaken by Pianko (1979). She found that the writers whose papers were judged superior spent more time pre-writing and rescanned more often. In general, the superior writers in Pianko's study paused to think more often. She suggested that those pauses may have given them a better sense of what the whole process was about. Theory and research seem to suggest that levels of competence in written discourse can be identified through holistic scoring, but that such levels can also be described through attention to the components of the writing process.

Audience awareness seems to be among those components. Research by Bissex (1980) demonstrated that there was no distinction between writer and audience at age four, but at age eight her subject wrote a story demonstrating that he could stand apart from his work. Smith and Swan (1978) found that high school students were less adept at distinguishing audience than college students. Differences in audience awareness among older writers were investigated by Flower and Hayes (Note 3. They reported that good writers generated 60 percent of their ideas in response to a larger rhetorical problem (the audience and their own goals for it). Only 30 percent were in response to the topic. Poor writers, however, made 70 percent of their statements about the topic alone.

## Purpose

Despite the research that has been constructed concerning the composing process in general and on revision and audience in particular, no studies described the ways that different levels of writers revised as they wrote for two different audiences.

The current study attempted to describe systematically the revision strategies of basic and competent twelftn grade writers as they wrote for two different audiences, their teachers and their peers.

## Design

Larson (1979) approved of the case study approach to the composing process, but suggested that research in the area might be improved if researchers asked fairly precise questions in the planning of case studies rather than examining the composing process globally with the intent to learn all at once about the process. The present

study attempted to generate hypotheses about revision by concentrating on the following questions:

Research Questions

1. What are the frequencies of the various points of revision, levels of revision, types of revision and purposes of revision for all the writers in the study?

2. What are the frequencies of the various points of revision, levels of revision, types of revision and purposes of revision broken down by audience?

3. What are the frequencies of the various points of revision, levels of revision, types of revision and purposes of revision broken down by level of competence?

4. What are the frequencies of the various points of revision, levels of revision, types of revision and purposes of revision broken down by audience and further broken down by level of competence?

5. In addition to the results of the breakdowns of the points, levels, types and purposes of revision, what other characteristics of the revision stategies of the basic and competent writers emerge from an analysis of their writing?

The Subjects

The study was conducted at an urban high school with an extremely diverse population in terms of ethnic background and socioeconomic status. Eight twelfth grade subjects were selected from among a pool of volunteers. The sample was selected based upon the following criteria:

1. Classification as a basic or competent writer. Four basic and

four competent writers were chosen based upon the scores that the writers achieved on the Regents Competency Test in Writing.

2. Written fluency and willingness to revise. Only subjects that produced screening essays of at least 150 words and contained at least five revisions were selected for participation.

## Materials

The following materials were used to conduct the study.

Instruments for determining level of competence. The level of competence of each subject was initially determined by the score the subjects achieved on the persuasive discourse section of the Regents Competency Test. That initial classification was checked by having students complete a screening essay on the topic, "Teenagers Need Summer Jobs." The screening essay was scored in a manner more rigorous than that used to score the Regents Competency Test. The three raters were instructed to rate each paper against the ten characteristics of exemplary papers before giving an holistic score.

Writing assignments. The writing assignments used in the study were developed and field tested by experienced teachers of English.

Interviews with teachers. Each subject's tenth and eleventh grade teachers of English were questioned about their estimation of the subject's level of competence, the audiences other than the teacher for which the subject was given the opportunity to write, and the methods used to teach revision. The responses of the teachers were used to develop narrative profiles of the subjects.

Interviews with subjects. The subjects were interviewed about their perceptions of their levels of competence, the feedback they had

received from their teachers about their writing, and the audiences other than their teachers for which they wrote. The data were used to develop the narrative profiles of each subject.

Probes by the investigator. If the reason for a revision was not made clear by the verbal protocols of the subjects or by the text itself, the investigator questioned the subjects.

Content analysis of writing assignments. The revisions the writers made were analyzed in terms of the tentative categories identified in the research and in terms of an additional level of analysis suggested by the data. The original categories were based on research by Bridwell (1980), National Assessment of Educational Progress (1977), Sommers (1978) and Stallard (1974).

Point of Revision

1. Pre-writing stage
2. During the first draft
3. Between drafts
4. During the second draft
5. After the second draft

Level of Revision

1. Surface level
2. Word level
3. Phrase level
4. Clause level
5. Sentence level
6. Paragraph level
7. Discourse level

Type of revision

1. Addition
2. Deletion
3. Substitution
4. Reordering
5. Embedding

Purpose of Revision

1. Cosmetic
2. Mechanical
3. Transitional
4. Informational
5. Stylistic

Time on task. The amount of time that each subject spent on the production of each composition was recorded.

Procedures

Each subject met with the investigator for five sessions of one hour each. The first session was devoted to providing the subjects with training in the composing aloud procedure. During the second session the subjects were asked to write a composition on the topic, "A Needed Change in the School Cafeteria." The audience for that piece was identified as the teacher. The subjects were reminded to use the composing aloud procedure. At the end of the session the subjects were asked to explain the revisions that they made by responding to the probes from the investigator.

During session three, which occurred the following day, the

subjects were given the opportunity to revise or redraft their compositions. At the end of the session, the subjects were asked to explain the revisions that they made by responding to the probes from the investigator.

During sessions four and five, which occurred approximately two weeks later, the subjects repeated the procedure for sessions two and three, using an equivalent topic, "A Needed Change in T.V. Programming," but a different audience: the students' peers.

## Analysis of the Data

Inter-rater Reliability. Cooper and Odell (1977) found that an inter-rater reliability coefficient of .87 can be achieved when raters of written discourse are properly trained. The teachers who participated in the grading of papers for the current study are trained and experienced in using the criteria established for the RCT.

Categorization. Each revision made by the subjects was categorized. The investigator established the accuracy, stability and consistency of the categorizations by training experienced teacher of English composition in the use of the procedure employed in the study to categorize the revisions. The nature of the data did not warrant the use of traditional correlational statistics, but after discussion and modification of the categories agreement was, reached on the categorizations of all revisions from the pilot study.

## Findings and Discussion

Since the current study used a descriptive, case study approach, a large amount of data were generated. These data included two or more drafts of two compositions by each of eight subjects, audio tapes of

the initial interview with each subject and of each subject's verbalizations while composing, and the responses of nine teachers who were interviewed about the subjects. In order to present these data in a way that is most manageable and valuable, the results of the study are described in two ways. First, an intensive analysis of the composing/revising processes of two selected subjects is presented. Second, an overview of all eight subjects is presented.

Two Case Studies

These two writers, Anne and Steven, should not be considered "typical"; nevertheless, they were chosen because their writing processes illustrate a great deal about the writing processes of basic and competent writers as they write for different audiences.

In addition to analyzing the performance of the two subjects in terms of the categories originally identified, a new dimension that has been suggested by recent research and theory on the writing process will be introduced into analysis of the data. This researcher has entitled that dimension "the revision episode." Smith (1981) emphasized a need for research that examines the size and nature of the writing episode, while Flower and Hayes (1981) examined planning episodes and hypothesized that "when people pause for significant lengths of time they pause in order to carry out more global rhetorical planning" (p. 230). In this study, the "revision episode" will include revisions which proceed in a "chain reaction" (Boiarsky, 1980) and which are originally initiated by one cue, from either inside or outside the text. While even the most isolated mechanical revision might be considered an episode, the analysis of the data in the current

study focuses on those revisions that occur in a chain reaction.

Anne. Based on all the data gathered during the screening procedures, Anne was classified as a competent writer. Anne paused often as she composed. When she did so, she usually went back and read the previous few words or sentences; she indicated that she had to do that in order to get a sense of what she was doing. As she produced her first draft, she made a total of 15 revisions. The highest percentage (33%) were cosmetic changes. She transcribed very quickly and often went back to re-form letters. Those corrections were made quickly, usually acknowledged with "Whoops" or "Oopps."

After completing a rough draft of her composition, Anne read her paper over. As she did so, she made 25 revisions. She still worked very quickly and, as with the first draft, the majority of her revisions were substitutions (52%). However, at this point, Anne demonstrated revision strategies quite different from those of the basic writers, as she made six revisions in which she included new information by embedding it within the structure of already existing material. As Anne copied over her draft, she made only 12 changes, the most noticeable of which was a discourse level, cosmetic substitution: she changed from script to printing. One of the characteristics that distinguished Anne's composing process from the composing processes of all but one of the other writers was that her most important revising came before she copied a draft over to make a "neat" copy.

The process Anne used to produce her composition for the peer audience was noticeably different from the process she used to produce her composition for the teacher audience. Although surface

substitutions predominated in the draft for the peer audience (72%), the levels of revision and the purposes for which the other revisions were made varied widely. In addition, many of the surface level substitutions were made so quickly that they never appeared in the verbal protocol, although they did appear as part of the text. For example, Anne changed Regan to Reagen and & to and without actually saying that she was doing so.

The pattern of revision strategies that Anne employed between the production of her first and second drafts for the peer audience was unique among all the patterns of revision used in the study. As she reread the draft she made 29 revisions. Though they were primarily word level substitutions, a simple tabulation of Anne's revisions would be misleading here. She made six revisions that required embedding, two of them requiring the insertion of whole paragraphs. Anne indicated that she was embedding the paragraphs in order to include information that would be appropriate for the audience. It should also be noted that Anne did not really follow a traditional "draft-revise-recopy" format. She created a series of "mini drafts" of parts of her composition that she wished to try out.

As Anne copied over her draft, she made more than double the number of revisions she had made in the draft for the teacher audience. A comment by Anne suggested that once she begins revising, she continues. Anne's revisions were also at a higher level than they were at the corresponding point in her paper for the teacher audience. For the second draft of the paper for the peer audience, Anne made 55% of her revisions at the clause level or higher, while she made only 33% of

her revisions at such a high level during the production of the second draft for the teacher audience. There was also more focus on informational revisions for the peer audience (42%) than for the teacher audience (11%). The analysis of Anne's revisions indicates that she was still revising while she completed the second draft for the peer audience, while she was primarily recopying while she completed the corresponding draft for the teacher audience. As Anne read over her draft before handing it in, she made only two word level changes, though she did indicate that she was aware of the audience by saying, "I hope they like this."

Table 1 provides a summary of Anne's revisions.

Table 1

Frequencies of

Anne's Revisions for Two Audiences

| | Points | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Audience | First Draft | Btwn Drafts | Second Draft | After Draft | Totals |
| Teacher | 15 | 25 | 12 | 2 | 54 |
| Peer | 25 | 29 | 26 | 2 | 82 |
| Totals | 40 | 54 | 38 | 4 | 136 |

An analysis of Anne's verbal protocols in conjunction with the drafts she produced indicates that Anne planned in episodes and also revised in episodes. She began her first draft for the teacher audience by pausing to think about where to begin, and after writing

several words, paused to make an outline. During the remainder of the time she spent writing the paper, Anne's behavior indicated that she engaged in three more planning episodes. As Anne reread her first draft, she paused frequently. Those pauses often occurred in groups as she went back to hear how a possible change sounded. Sometimes a pause to make a relatively simple change like the deletion of "physical" in "physical fights" cued a larger change such as the insertion of the sentence, "Perhaps after one or two incidents, these troublemakers could be forbidden in the cafeteria." These two changes form a "revision episode" and within that revision episode, another revision episode occurred. Anne paused to fix the spelling of troublemaker and while doing so, she embedded the demonstrative adjective these to create the phrase "these troublemakers."

The revision episode became a key component of Anne's composition for the peer audience. As she produced the first draft for the peer audience she paused briefly several times, but there were no long pauses or other indications of global planning. Anne did most of her planning while writing; and, as she read over her draft, she did her planning while she was reading, making several minor revisions. Anne did engage in one long revision episode near the end of that draft; the planning for that episode was obviously done while the rereading was taking place. The entire episode seems to have been cued by Anne's own text. She paused several times as she reread the paragraph in which she eventually embedded the revision. Finally, she paused and began the revision. In the process of creating that revision, Anne made ten other minor revisions, creating a revision episode.

As Anne began her "final" draft for the peer audience, the episodic nature of her revision strategy became even more pronounced. The cue for the first revision episode came during the period between the writing of the first and second drafts. She decided to begin with a question and this change cued six other related revisions in the first paragraph. Anne explained that these revision episodes (though she did not use the term) require her to use additional sheets of paper. Toward the end of the composition another revision episode that included the embedding of three related episodes occurred. That episode seems to have been cued by the already existing text.

Steven. Based on the data gathered during the screening procedures, Steven was classified as a basic writer. During the production of the first draft for the teacher audience, Steven made 18 revisions, all of them substitutions and half of them cosmetic. The researcher noted that Steven often grimaced as he produced an incorrect pen stroke. He was very aware of the exact letters and words that he was producing and often replaced letters and words without actually changing them.

Steven produced a very long first draft, the longest produced by any basic writer in the study; nevertheless, he made only two changes as he reread it. However, he orally corrected many of the mechanical and grammatical errors in the paper as he reread it, though he did not acknowledge any of the differences between what he had said and what he had written. Steven's behavior was consistent with Perl's (1979) findings. Her subjects also corrected errors in their papers as they reread them without actually making the corrections on paper.

During the production of his second draft for the teacher audience, Steven made 34 revisions. Though he was like the other basic writers in the study in that his revisions were primarily substitutions (70%), he did make a variety of types of revisions including reorderings (3%) and deletions (21%). Of all the writers in the study, Steven was most willing to delete material that he had written. The purposes of the revisions that Steven made were also varied.

As he had done during the rereading of his first draft, Steven made few actual corrections as he reread his second draft. Steven demonstrated an awareness of audience as he wrote his first composition, though he did not address the audience that was identified in the assignment: the teacher. Rather, he created an audience for the composition, the manager of the school cafeteria; and for part of his paper he addressed that audience directly. At other times, his behavior indicated that he was addressing the "collective unknown."

Steven's draft for the peer audience was considerably shorter than his draft for the teacher audience and contained fewer revisions. Nevertheless, the patterns of his revisions were essentially the same for both audiences. He spent 34 minutes on the draft.

As Steven copied over his composition for the peer audience, he made 17 revisions. This was only half the number of revisions that he made as he copied over his draft for the teacher audience, but the draft was only approximately half as long. As he read over his draft for the peer audience, Steven's behavior was consistent with his behavior on all previous occasions. He made only two revisions during the proofreading, though he orally corrected many of the grammatical

and syntactical errors. Steven spent a total of 28 minutes on the production of his second draft for the peer audience.

As he composed his paper for the peer audience, Steven indicated that the audience for the piece influenced his composing process, if not necessarily his revising process. He said, "I don't want students to get the idea that I really want this...I want them to get my point of view."

An overview of the revisions that Steven made as he completed the two drafts for each of the two audiences is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequencies of

Steven's Revisions for Two Audiences

| | Points | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Audience | First Draft | Btwn Drafts | Second Draft | After Draft | Totals |
| Teacher | 18 | 2 | 34 | 1 | 55 |
| Peer | 11 | 2 | 17 | 2 | 32 |
| Totals | 29 | 4 | 51 | 3 | 87 |

An analysis of Steven's verbal protocols in conjunction with the drafts that he produced revealed that he composed in episodes, though they were brief ones. The transcripts of his oral composing for the first draft of his composition for the teacher audience revealed that he stopped writing nine times (for more than 30 seconds) before announcing that he had decided upon a new unit for discussion. At the conclusion of those "pregnant pauses," he announced his plans to write

about various aspects of the topic. As Steven reviewed the first draft, he paused only twice. There was no evidence that what Steven read caused enough dissonance for him to make changes. As he copied over the draft, he paused briefly several times, but his behavior indicated that he was having trouble following his handwriting.

An analysis of Steven's verbal protocols in conjunction with the first draft he produced for the peer audience reveals that he paused in his writing 11 times during the production of the draft. While the pauses were primarily for planning, they suggested degree of recursiveness that had not appeared present during the production of the first draft for the teacher audience. During these pauses, Steven announced his plans and concerns about the topic. Steven's pauses did show concern for reviewing and concern for the audience, though neither cued any revisions. As Steven read over his draft for the peer audience he only paused twice and both of those pauses were due to problems he had reading his writing. As he copied over the draft, he paused 17 times, but his behavior indicated that he was pausing because he was not able to hold more than approximately half a sentence in his memory. As he read over the draft, the pattern was the same: he paused when he had trouble reading but made no content related revisions.

Comparison of Anne and Steven. Although the results of the analysis of the composing/revising processes of Steven and Anne are generally consistent with the results of earlier studies, the data demand comparison along another dimension: the episodic nature of the composing/revising process. Anne planned her writing in episodes that were relatively global; consequently, she paused infrequently to plan.

Steven paused far more often. His planning rarely went beyond the boundary of the next sentence. Anne's pauses to plan were of a longer duration, and she engaged in fewer of them.

Anne's revisions were also characterized by extended episodes; Steven's were not. For Anne, one revision cued as many as 10 others. In no case did the analysis of the data from Steven's compositions indicate that any of Steven's revisions were cued by previous revisions. Furthermore, the data indicated that Anne's revisions were cued from within and without the text, or in a combination of the two, with a revision from one source subsequently cueing a revision from the other. Steven's revisions were cued exclusively by his text.

Overview

The complete pattern of tabulations of the revisions made by the eight writers in the study are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequencies of

Revisions of All Writers for Two Audiences

| Writer | Audience: Teacher | Peer | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Basic Writers** | | | |
| Angie | 76 | 51 | 127 |
| Carrie | 25 | 14 | 39 |
| Lisa | 28 | 39 | 67 |
| Steven | 55 | 32 | 87 |
| Subtotals | 184 | 136 | 320 |
| **Competent Writers** | | | |
| Anne | 54 | 82 | 136 |
| Dawn | 32 | 32 | 64 |
| Lilly | 15 | 24 | 39 |
| Maydee | 50 | 42 | 92 |
| Subtotals | 151 | 180 | 331 |
| Totals | 335 | 316 | 651 |

The range of revisions made by the eight writers in the study illustrated that the basic and competent writers were generally capable of using the same revision strategies. The competent writers, however, were more likely to employ a wider range of revisions at a wider variety of points in the production of their compositions.

The audience played some part in the revising processes of all the writers in the study. There were numerous similarities in the ways

that the individual writers in the study treated the two audiences. Of the eight writers, only one used any revision strategy specifically identified as being aimed at the teacher audience, and that was the only time the teacher audience was mentioned in the entire study. All the subjects made unsolicited mention of the peer audience. Four of the writers, two basic and two competent, attempted to deal specifically with the peer audience during the revision of their compositions, but only the competent writers actually executed any strategies specifically aimed at the peer audience.

There were differences in the revisions that the two groups of writers made for the two audiences. The patterns were almost the reverse of one another, with the basic writers making most of their revisions for the teacher audience and the competent writers making most of their revisions for the peer audience.

## Conclusions and Implications

The students designated as competent writers made more revisions than the students designated as basic writers, and although both groups made most of their changes at the word and surface levels, the competent writers were more likely to make changes at the clause, sentence and paragraph levels. These results are consistent with those obtained in earlier studies of the revision process (Bridwell, 1980; Faigley, 1981; Sommers, 1978). In addition, the statistical data suggested the possibility of the interaction between audience, level of competence and revision strategies, since the basic writers made more revisions for the teacher audience while the competent writers made more revisions for the peer audience. However, the statistical results

alone can obscure some of the important aspects of the data, the most important of which is the fact that the basic writers possessed all of the same revision strategies as the competent writers, though the constraints under which the basic writers were operating caused them to use many of those strategies less often.

Constraints

The results indicate that the linear nature of the composing processes of the basic writers may have resulted from the nature of the constraints within which the basic writers were operating. One constraint that was apparent in Steven's and Lisa's work was the inability to transcribe quickly and effortlessly. Maydee and Anne, both competent writers, seemed to realize that it is necessary to write very fast to keep from losing one's thoughts. The results of the study seem to suggest that it is not necessary to write neatly to write effectively; the results further suggest that effective writers concentrate on content while ineffective writers concentrate on penmanship.

The results also suggested that the basic writers were constrained by their view of writing as a draft-redraft process with corrections made during the production of the second draft, while the competent writers were aware of the possibility of revision at a variety of points and saw the final draft as a process of creating a "neat copy." The behavior of the most competent writers was consistent with that of one of the experienced writers in Sommers' (1980) study who commented, "I rewrite as I write. It is hard to tell what is a first draft because it is not determined by time" (p. 384).

The results of the current study seem to suggest that the levels at which dissonance occurs relate to the levels at which revisions are made. For example, Steven felt dissonance because the words that were in his head did not exactly match the words that appeared on the page so he made cosmetic changes to resolve that dissonance. Anne, on the other hand, felt dissonance because of the content and style of her compositions and made changes that were appropriate for the audience. The results also suggest that since dissonance is associated with commitment to task and audience, school sponsored tasks may produce little dissonance, no matter what the audience.

The Impact of Audience

The data from the current study suggest that all the writers in the study brought the audience for the two compositions to a level of awareness, at least initially, but that the competent writers were more likely to return to consider that audience than the basic writers were. It may be that all the writers in the study, both basic and competent, did not do more in terms of adjusting their compositions to the audience because they were constrained by the rather limited focus of the topic.

Episodic Nature of Revision

The data seem to suggest that although competent writers often make isolated revisions, they also revise in extended episodes at times. The "revision episodes" consist of groups of revision that occur in what Boiarsky (1980) called a chain reaction. The first revision in such a chain reaction may be cued from within or without the text, but subsequent revisions seem to be cued by an earlier

revision in the chain. The data suggest that the number of revisions that a writer makes may not be as important as the interrelatedness of those revisions.

## Implications

The results of the current study suggest implications for the teaching of audience awareness and revision. Although all the teachers claimed that they gave their students opportunities to write for non-teacher audiences, none of the students mentioned any of those audiences when they were asked to identify the audiences other than their teachers for which they wrote.

The comments made by the teachers about how they "taught" revision suggested something about the nature of revision in school sponsored writing. Seven of the nine teachers claimed that they taught revision by having students write second drafts using a "checklist" that was either taken from a grammar text or developed by the teacher. In the production of their compositions in the current study, the basic writers seem to approach revision as a two draft, checklist type of operation.

In the current study, the researcher's observation of the basic writers, especially Steven and Lisa, suggested that the composing/revising processes of basic writers may be restricted because of problems with the production of text. D'Angelo (1982) has suggested that students with transcribing problems should be taught calligraphy to improve their handwriting. Another possible way of providing appropriate "procedural facilitation" (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1980) might be the use of computers. Procedures for using computers to

lessen the executive burden of mental tasks like writing were suggested by Woodruff, Bereiter and Scardamalia (Note 4) and Monahan (1982). "Procedural facilitation" that helps writers revise can be achieved less expensively by instructing students in the use of a "cut and paste" (Boiarsky, 1980) style of revision.

Kroll (1979) said that "we have not yet begun to identify which level of choices in writing is subject to conscious inspection or rule adherence and which level of choices is best sorted out through unconscious feel" (p. 86). This study attempted to do that with respect to revision and raised the question of whether the revision strategies that are used regularly by competent writers but only intermittently by basic writers can be brought to a higher level of awareness for the basic writers. Larson (Note 5) said, "One task of the teacher, surely, is to enlarge students' perceptions of when revising can occur, what revising is and how, during revision, the writer can try to 're-see' in whole or part the substance as well as the form of the composition" (p. 23).

## Suggestions for Further Research

The results of the current study suggest that there may be a relationship between the audience for a piece of discourse and the revision strategies employed by the person producing the discourse. The results also suggests the need for a study of writers' "interlanguage." A comparison of Steven's rereadings of his drafts with the drafts themselves reveals that he corrects many of his errors without noticing that he has corrected them. These findings are consistent with earlier findings by Bartholomae (1980) and Perl (1980).

Finally, the results suggest the need for a study which focuses on the length and nature of the "revision episode" as the unit of analysis seems justified by the data in the current study, since the revision episode seems to be a characteristic of competent writers, but not of basic writers. The data in this study suggest that it might be worthwhile to investigate the nature of the cues that cause writers to revise in episodes and compare them with the cues that cause writers to make isolated revisions.

## Reference Notes

1. Spear, K. Empathy and revision. Paper presented at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Communication, Washington, D. C., March 1980.

2. Pferrer, S. The effects of multiple revision on freshman writing. Paper presented at the conference on College composition and Communication, Washington, D. C. March 1980.

3. Flower, L. & Hayes, J. Process-based evaluation of writing: Changing the performance, not the product. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Convention, San Francisco, April 1979.

4. Woodruff, E., Bereiter, C. & Scardamalia, M. Experiments in computer assisted instruction. Unpublished manuscript, 1981. (Available from Earl Woodruff, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S1V6)

5. Larson, R. Some propositions about the process of composing. Conference Presentations from Competency Testing and Beyond. The New York State Education Department, 1979, 22-24.

## References

Applebee, A. N., Lehr, F. & Auten, A. Learning to write in the secondary school: How and where. English Journal, 1981, 70(5), 78-82.

Barrit, L. Writing/speaking: A descriptive phenomenological view. In B. Kroll & R. J. Vann (Eds.), Exploring speaking-writing relationships: Connections and contrasts. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1981.

Bartholomae, D. The study of error. College Composition and Communication, 1980, 31, 253-269.

Bereiter, C. & Scardamalia, M. From conversation to composition: The role of instruction in a developmental process. In R. Glaser (Ed.), Advances in instructional psychology. Vol. 2. Hillside, N. J.: Erlbaum, 1980.

College Composition and Communication, 1981, 32, 388-399.

Birnbaum, J. Why should I write? Environmental influences on children's views of writing. Theory Into Practice, 1980, 19, 202-210.

Bissex, G. Patterns of development in writing: A case study. Theory Into Practice, 1980, 19, 197-201.

Boiarsky, C. Cut and paste and other revision activities. English Journal, 1980, 69(8), 44-47.

Bridwell, L. S. Revising strategies in twelfth grade twelfth grade students' transactional writing. Research in the Teaching of English, 1980, 14, 197-222.

Britton, J., Burgess, T., Martin, S., Mc Leod, A. & Rosen, H. The development of writing abilities (11-18). London: Macmillian Education, 1975.

Burnette, P. Staff grading as an alternative to schizophrenia in composition class. English Journal, 1980, 69(8), 32-36.

Comprone, J. Kenneth Burke and the teaching of writing. College Composition and Communiction, 1978, 28, 336-340.

Cooper, C. Holistic evaluation of writing. In C. Cooper & L. Odell (Eds.), Evaluating writing. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1977.

Cooper, C. & Odell, L. Introduction. In C. Cooper & L. Odell (Eds.), Evaluating writing. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1977.

D'Angelo, K. Developing legibility and uniqueness in handwriting with calligraphy. Language Arts, 1982, 59, 23-27.

Emig, J. The composing processes of twelfth graders. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1971.

Faigley, L. Using text structure models for analyzing revision. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Dallas, March 1981. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 199 738)

Flower, L. & Hayes, J. The cognition of discovery. College Composition and Communication, 1980, 31, 21-32.

Flower L. & Hayes, J. The pregnant pause: An inquiry into the nature of planning. Research in the Teaching of English, 1981, 15, 229-243.

Hirsch, D. The philosophy of composition. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977.

Kroll, B. Cognitive egocentricism and the problem of audience awareness in written discourse. Research in the Teaching of English, 1978, 12, 132-143.

Larson, R. Needed research on invention. In A. Purves (Ed.), Cognition and written languge: A symposium. Pittsburg, March 1979. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 178 918)

Lunsford, A. The context of basic writers' essays, College Composition and Communication, 1980, 31, 278-290.

Martin, N. Why write. In M. Marland (Ed.), Writing across the curriculum. London: Heinmann, 1977.

Mc Teague, F. An investigation of secondary student writing across the curriculum and some suggestions for school language policies, 1980. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 182 770)

Monahan, B. Computing and revising. English Journal, 1982, 71(7), 93-94.

Murray, D. M. Internal revision: A process of discovery. In C. Cooper & L. Odell (Eds.), Research on composing: Points of departure. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1978.

National Assessment of Educational Progress. Write/rewrite: An assessment of revision skills; selected results from the second national assessment of writing. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1977. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 141 826)

Nold, E. Revising: Toward a theory. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Minneapolis, April 1979. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 172 212)

Ong, W. The writer audience is always a fiction. PMLA, 1975, 90, 9-22.

Perl, S. A. Five writers writing: Case studies of the composing processes of unskilled college writers. (Doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1978), Dissertation Abstracts International, 1979, 39, 4788A. (University Microfilms No. 7824104)

Perl, S. A. Understanding composing. College Composition and Communication, 1980, 31, 363-369.

Pianko, S. A description of the composing processes of college freshman writers. Research in the Teaching of English, 1979, 13, 5-22.

Smith, F. Writing and the writer. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1981.

Smith, W. & Swan, M. Adjusting syntactic structures to varied levels of audience. Journal of Experimental Education, 1978, 46, 29-34.

Sommers, N. Revision in the composing process: A case study of college freshmen and experienced adult writers. (Doctoral dissertation, Boston University, 1978). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1979, 39, 5374A. (University Microfilms No. 7905022)

Sommers, N. Revision strategies of student writers and experienced adult writers. College Composition and Communication, 1980, 31, 378-387.

Stallard, C. An analysis of the writing behavior of good student writers. Research in the Teaching of English, 1974, 8, 206-218.

Stone, W. B. Rewriting in advanced composition. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Dallas, 1981. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 199 738)

Vygotsky, L. Thought and language. E. Haufmann & G. Vakar (Eds. & trans.). Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1962.